TALES OF THE SEA TRADERS AS TOLD AT INDIA HOUSE

Men Who Are Putting Our Flag Back on the Oceans Lunch Amid Atmosphere of Fine Old Traditions

THERE is no romance left in the world. The financial district is a conglomerate of bonds and brick, coupons and concrete, stocks and stone. Jason and his forty-nine fellow cabin passengers on the Argo were hard headed captains of finance, and the Golden Fleece was a mining concession in Colchis that smelled strongly of a violation of the Sherman law.

It was with such a jaundiced view that THE SUN man crossed the threshold of India House, passed the little Japanese billiken that presides over the doorway, and found himself talk about the magic carpet of Prince Houssain, the lamp of Aladdin transplanted suddenly out of the humdrum world of the money changers into an atmosphere that breathes the finest romance, and one of the saddest, in the world; the rise, the glory and the decline of the American merchant marine.

Here is the story that was erased from the tablets of the reportorial mind: "India House was opened on November 16, 1914, as a luncheon club for men actively interested in the foreign commerce of the United States. It occupies the quaint old three story building, a relic of the first half of the last century, that forms the south side of Hanover square and was once the Cotton Exchange and more recently the offices of W. R. Grace & Co."

Why tell the story of dead and unresponsive walls? Not that the walls of India House are dead and unresponsive. They have been made to reflect the fine old traditions of the days when our argosies filled the seas, when the Stars and Stripes were known, and respected, in every port in the world. But the story of India House that THE SUN man found was not the story of India House itself but of the men who made it a possibility and whose continued and boyishly enthusiastic support lifts it out of the rank of a mere place to eat into that of an institution distinctive in the varied life of the metropolis.

These enthusiasts set about the making of India House in the right way. The first thing they did was to create an atmosphere. This they accomplished by gathering what is without doubt the most extensive and valuable collection of pictures relating to the sea glory of the United States in existence. Some striking examples from the collection will be found in the Pictorial Magazine of THE SUN of this date, only a suggestion of the whole, however, for the makers of India House numbered many enthusiastic collectors, and every man gave freely of his treasures until there is not an inch of space left on the walls of the three floors or the stairways.

Willard Straight, to whom more than any other man the inception of India House is due and whose pet it is, contributed lavishly of the magnificent examples of Chinese art that he has brought from the Orient. Herbert L. Satterlee and the Asiatic Institute drew heavily upon their fine collections, with the result that the whole history of American sea power, from the naval victories of the Revolution to its apogee at the beginning of the civil war, and then the less glorious but pointed story of its decline, may be read upon the walls.

If the imagination is quickened by the pictures of India House, what of the men? The luncheon hour is of course the time to answer this question, for the luncheon hour at India House is a gathering up of threads that run into the busy marts of the Far East, the teeming bazaars of India, the pampas and Andean passes of South America, the veldt and the jungles of Africa, the battlefields and the chancelleries of Europe and even to the steppes of Tibet.

A hardy American structural iron worker is swinging on a steel girder over some foaming chasm in Central Africa. American bridges are the standard the world over, and the man who sent the ironworker there probably is sitting down to order his noonday meal from India House's famous English grill together with the man who made the steel.

A Yankee travelling salesman is demonstrating the virtues of a phonograph to a delighted Hottentot chief. There is the same invisible tie that binds him to India House at the luncheon hour.

A mining engineer is threading the passes of the Andes hot on the scent of the earth's buried riches. The brain that directs him, about noontime, will be resting at India House.

Popular imagination has not been accustomed to look upon America as a world trader, but here are men who have been exploring the markets of the earth since long before the present cataclysm in Europe dumped into the lap of the United States its horn of golden opportunities, and the foreign trade jumped in 1915 close to the five billion mark, of which near three billions were exports. And just as all roads led to Rome so do all the nerves of this new as well as the old effort to give America its proper place in world trade centre in India House.

"Romance!" THE SUN man's vis-a-vis at the India House table was a man, who, though he is to be nameless in this story, has the personal history of the members at his finger ends. "What finer romance ever was written than the business careers of some of these fellows here?"

"Take Willard Straight, there." He indicated a tall, spare, boyish faced man, with a handshake for everybody that carried with it a generous gift of enthusiasm but left the original store unimpaired. "The idea of this club was his. It is his child and pet. A poor boy, son of missionary teachers in Japan, he mastered everything that was learnable about the Orient, including the Chinese and Japanese languages."

Another look at Willard Straight, with solemn reverence for any man not Chinese who could master the Chinese language. Yes, not so improbable after all. That wide, bulging forehead was not given to him for nothing.

"Willard Straight dreamed the entry of the United States into the trade of the Orient when the mere mention of American foreign trade was a joke. Jumping over a few years, and not idle ones, and the missionary's son becomes vice-president of the American International Corporation and a recognized authority on the commerce and finance of the Far East."

This was getting interesting. No romance! Material here for a novel, to say nothing of a five reel motion picture film. And then THE SUN man's informant began to expand that Willard Straight five reeler into the limits of an India House serial.

Enter Joseph R. Grace—he's treasurer of India House, by the way. The picture: An Irish lad, Mr. Grace's father, goes to sea to seek his fortune. He lands in South America. Out of the tissue of its limitless possibilities he evolves a dream that peoples the seas with his ships. He comes to New York, bringing as almost his only capital an intimate knowledge of South America, its needs and its opportunities. He founds the shipping house of W. R. Grace & Co., one of the greatest shipping companies engaged in the foreign trade of the United States. The dream ships are a reality. The Irish immigrant becomes Mayor of New York and his house to-day is one of the most important agencies in keeping our flag on the seas.

A tall, kindly, rather quizzical faced, weatherbeaten man, with the dominant eye of an old sea captain and a patriarchal white beard, walks onto the screen. He is Capt. Robert Dollar, head of the Robert Dollar line of steamships, trading to the Orient. Noontime finds him at India House whenever he is in New York. He has lived to see his line grow into one of the most important on the Pacific and then to see it all but wiped out of existence by the La Follette seamen's law as effectually as if torpedoed by a German U boat.

Capt. Dollar modestly attributes his success in the Chinese trade solely to his beard. And here is a secret that is whispered in India House. The Dollar beard has done more than the dollar diplomacy to keep the open door to China from being slammed in our faces. For to thousands of Chinese Capt. Dollar is a patriarch and their Oriental minds picture him and his fair dealings as typical of all that is American.

The film now shifts to a busy street in Yokohama. Hundreds, yes, thousands, of jinrickshas are flying about to the steady "pat-pat" of the coolie jinricksha men. Those jinrickshas, most of them, at any rate, and all of the noiseless ones, were manufactured at Burlington, N. J. And over there at that table at India House sits the man who is jinricksha maker extraordinary to the world. He is Harris R. Childs of the Birch Carriage Company of Burlington, N. J.

It all came about through the Yankee faculty of seeing and seizing an opportunity. Bicycle wheels, pneumatic tires and ball bearings make a better jinricksha than centuries of Oriental ingenuity have been able to evolve. Jinrickshas are used not only in densely populated Japan and China, but in Madagascar, Abyssinia, Ceylon, everywhere, in fact, where coolie labor is plentiful. The demand for Col. Beriah Sellers's eye-water was a drugged market compared with the chances for a jinricksha built on Yankee ideas. Mr. Childs seized the opportunity and his easy running, noiseless jinrickshas are now making glad the feet of coolies all over the world.

The romance of the American made jinricksha is paralleled by that of the American made file. Get Samuel N. Nicholson of the Nicholson File Company to talking files during the luncheon hour at India House. He is a regular encyclopedia of strange facts about files. He will tell you that the United States is fast capturing the file trade of the world because we can make a better file here than they can in England. Files formerly were all made by hand and their manufacture was practically an English monopoly. Yankee ingenuity found a quicker way to make a better file by machinery, and now American files and file making machinery are fast displacing the English product.

The man who just came in and took a chair under the picture of the clipper ship Dreadnought, nineteen days out of Liverpool, is the boss of that structural ironworker swinging over an African chasm. He is Joshua A. Hatfield, president of the American Bridge Company, a concern that has built bridges right around the earth, the seas excepted, and would undertake to bridge them if there were anything within reach upon which to anchor piers.

From the critical way Mr. Hatfield surveys the big table laid out, English fashion, with great cuts of meat, the tables of hors d'oeuvres and legumes, it might be inferred that he is some famous maitre d'hotel at India House for pointers. The fact is that when Mr. Hatfield is inside India House it is a whole lot easier to get him to talking about those cuts of meat than about bridges. As chairman of the house and executive committees he has developed a positive genius for running a club. India House members say he spoiled a mighty fine hotel man when he got into the bridge business. They cheerfully give him much of the credit for the perfect cuisine of India House and for the fact that the club since the doors opened has been on a paying basis.

Mr. Hatfield has had an able colaborer in bringing India House to a point of gastronomic perfection. He is E. A. S. Clarke, president of the Lackawanna Steel Company. Mr. Hatfield and Mr. Clarke, their India House friends say, could take hold of any hotel in the country and manage it without turning a hair.

Genius in unlooked for lines is not a rarity in India House, but the cap sheaf of anomalous lines of endeavor is found in Walter L. Clark of the New England Westinghouse Company, one of the organizers and directors of the club. Mr. Clark, when he is not being a first rate electrical man, is a portrait painter of note. His latest work, a life size and lifelike portrait of James A. Farrell, president of the United States Steel Corporation and also president of India House, hangs at the end of the main lounge of India House.

Another member of India House who has two widely divergent claims to fame is Charles H. Sherrill, former Minister to Argentina. Mr. Sherrill will long be remembered in college athletics as the crack 100 yard man of Yale and the inventor of the crouching start.

Minor C. Keith and S. J. Schermerhorn are two of the regulars at India House. Their company, the United Fruit Company, is one of the greatest of the foreign traders. It owns ships, railroads, banana plantations, stores, trading stations and, so it is sometimes whispered, Central American governments by the handful. Another regular is John D. Ryan, president of the Anaconda Copper Company, whose mining operations cover a large section of the earth, and which now, so it is reported, is going very extensively into mining operations in western South America.

Among the great international bankers who are members of India House and who may frequently be seen there at the luncheon hour are Frank A. Vanderlip of the National City Bank, which is performing the needful service of giving credit facilities to the foreign trade through its newly organized branches in South America; Charles H. Sabin of the Guaranty Trust Company, one of the greatest foreign exchange houses in the United States; A. H. Wiggin, president of the Chase National Bank; Francis L. Hine, president of the First National Bank, and Henry P. Davison of the firm of J. P. Morgan & Co.

India House also boasts a "greatest in the world" group of members. There is R. A. C. Smith, the tallest dock commissioner in captivity and the head of the greatest dock system in the world. There is P. A. S. Franklin, the young man who heads one of the greatest and since the war stopped the German lines and crippled the English by far the greatest steamship line in the world, the International Mercantile Marine Company. Mr. Franklin, by the way, has his own room at India House. He preempted it when he found it possessed an open fireplace, and so the members have playfully put a sign "Franklin Room" over the door and hung in it a picture of Benjamin Franklin for the sake of eternal verities.

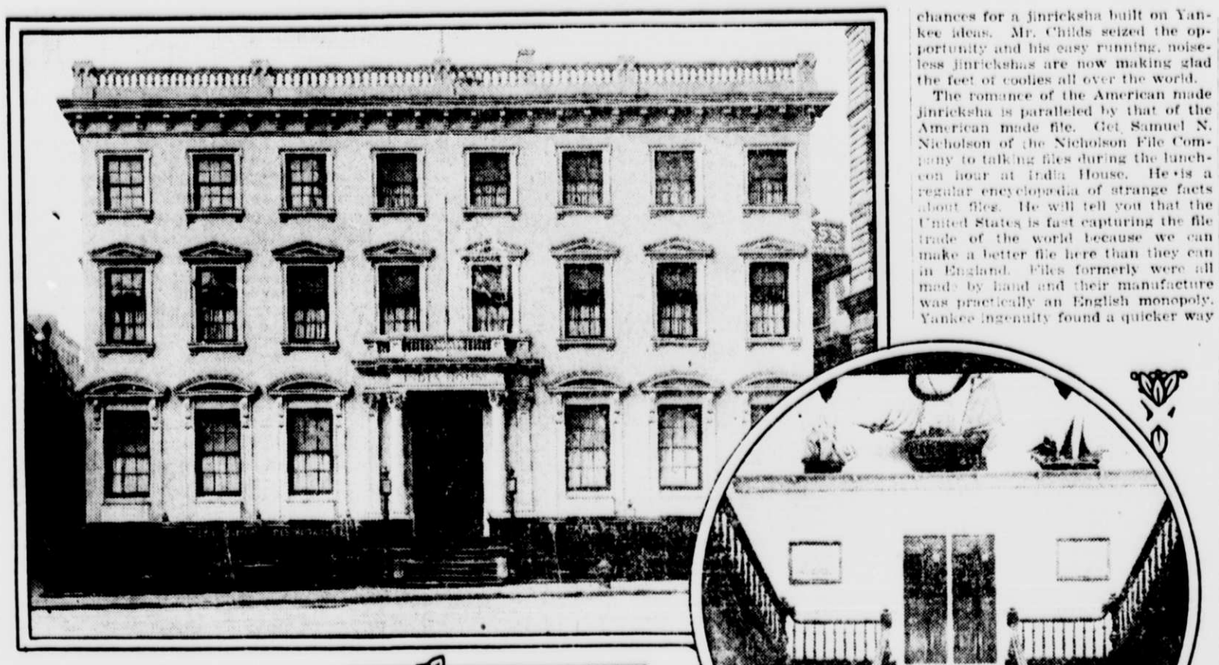
The third member of the "greatest in the world" group is W. Fellowes Morgan, president of the Merchants Association, an organization that represents more wealth, more widespread interests and more important activities than any other commercial body in the world, not even the wealthiest of the ancient guilds of London excepted.

A strong candidate for membership in this group is Eugene P. Thomas, president of the United States Steel Products Company, the foreign selling agency of the United States Steel Corporation. The foreign trade of the steel products company in normal times exceeded $100,000,000 a year and was only surpassed by that of the Standard Oil Company.

Among other members of India House whose business activities form important chapters in the romance of American reaching out into the world's markets are Col. Samuel P. Colt, president of the United States Rubber Company, whose foreign operations are themselves a romance story; Welding Ring of Mailler, Queneau & Co., extensive traders with Australasia; Julius Kruttschnitt chairman of the Southern Pacific Railroad, whose ships were driven off the Pacific by the La Follette laws; John Ferd, secretary of the American Asiatic Society, who fairly exudes information upon opportunities Oriental, J. G. White of J. G. White & Co., whose workers are draining South American capitals, building South American railways and carrying the influence of American business into every corner of the southern hemisphere; R. P. Tinsley, secretary and treasurer of the newly formed $50,000,000 International Corporation, which, it was announced last week, is laying plans for a new fleet of transpacific ships that would keep the American flag flying in the Pacific, and Irving T. Bush of the Bush Terminal.

A roster of the regulars in fact is a list of the foremost business men of New York whose activities have to do with the foreign trade.

No, the financial district is not merely the walls and roofs that house the money changers. It has its romances, and one of the finest of them is the present endeavor of which India House is the soul, to bring back the foreign trade of the United States to its former importance and glory. The Golden Fleece is not always translated into terms of dollars and cents. Often it is an ideal. It is an ideal with India House, for the conversation over the luncheon tables there is not of dollars and cents, but of achievement.



India House.

One of the India House dining rooms. Above—The central stairway.

Photos courtesy of *Gas Logic*.

Rapidity With Which United States Is Regaining Lost Prestige Exemplified by Their Activities

PERILS OF TELEPHONE MEN IN KEEPING THE COAST TO COAST LINE OPEN

THROUGH a bleak pass in the Sierra Nevada down which the frayed end of a blizzard shrieks as it drives the last wet flakes of snow, two men are laboriously breaking trail. Their backs are laden with heavy coils of wire and instruments; the effort of lifting a snow-shoe packed with what is nearly slush grows greater with every yard. Hour after hour they plod on, hungry, half frozen and infinitely weary.

Why? Over their heads hang ice laden wires, singing a deep storm chorus under the beat of the gale. There is no human habitation for miles but east and west of the toilers the wires carry their song through chill canyons, over desert and rolling prairie, to where in warm, softly lighted dining rooms in New York and San Francisco hotels the copper lines end in two prosaic looking black telephone instruments.

One of the after dinner demonstrations of the transcontinental telephone service which have been a feature of many dinners recently, is to be given. Beside the plate of each diner is a receiver disk. Presently the diners will listen to words spoken 3,000 miles away and marvel as the answer flies back in the fraction of a second. That is, they will if those two weary men, the "trouble shooters" of their section, find in time the break which the blizzard has left in its wake.

Hour after hour they beat forward against the wind, crushing a path in the white wilderness of snow that is piled fifteen feet beneath them. Behind them on the trail two of their gang have been left huddled about a meagre fire, to wait for the rescue party that has been summoned with test instruments. Quit? Why, they never think of quitting. Their business is to find that break. And finally they reach it, a great scar on a mountain side where a snow slide has torn out a mile of poles and wires.

The coils of wire are dumped on the snow, strung across the path of the avalanche—another weary bit of work—and connected with the broken ends that dangle from the poles left at each side of the break. The last connection is made, the "trouble shooters" grin feebly at each other and drop in their tracks.

The song of the wires goes on and in that cheery room back in New York a man picks up the telephone and says to a friend in San Francisco:

"Hello, Professor. Isn't this perfectly wonderful? Another triumph of science!"

But if you asked one of those exhausted trouble men back there in the snow if his name was "science" he would probably think that suffering had turned your head and growl at you.

At this season, when the winds tear through the Rockies carrying great falls of snow that snap poles and wires and bury them deep, the work of the trouble men is going on all the time.

And the troubles are not confined to the ravages of winter blizzards. Prairie fires, destructive floods, even blazes in a city through which the wires run all play their part in making work for the trouble man, whose only idea is to find the break and fix it, no matter what the danger.

One day early in the winter a cold and a driving gale hit western Nevada where the transcontinental line stretches across the shallow waters of Humboldt Lake. In the rush of ice floes a mile of wire went down, and the trouble shooters went out in the teeth of a seventy mile gale to restore the line. They worked four days and nights in water up to the waist.

There were twenty men in the gang and they worked in shifts at intervals of twenty minutes. Big fires were built at each end of the break in the lake and when the men made their way out of the freezing water, chilled to the bone by the Nevada gale, they dried out and got warm by the fire and then tackled the job again. Day and night they worked till the wires were up and then the wind went down.

One of the worst stretches in the Sierra Nevada, where the wires are strung along the mountain peaks to avoid the danger of snow slides, is between Truckee and Dutch Flats, a distance of forty-one miles. Nine men cover this stretch, men who are at home on snowshoes and can stand the test of breaking trail at the rate of a mile an hour without dying of exhaustion. They use snowshoes or skis, and travel in pairs for safety. Three shelter houses are along the line, and they are needed.

One of the most trying times that the trouble men have bucked up against came on December 3 and 4, 1915. A special demonstration had been scheduled to take place in Paterson, N. J., for the members of the Rotary Club. The experience of the telephone men on that occasion shows the wonderful system in which every man does his bit without asking why, and does it as fast as he knows how.

The demonstration was set for the night of December 4 and the night before the wind began to howl and the snow to sift down in great sheets and drifts out in the Sierra. By morning the snow was piled twelve feet high, poles and crossarms had been splintered and a coat of ice had snapped wires all the way from Emigrant Gap to Truckee, a distance of twenty-seven miles. The trouble men were divided into pairs and each pair had six miles to cover. The snow was soft and wet, nearly slush; it would not carry the men over boulders and brush and they had practically to dig their way through. But the word was to fix that line, and they went to it.

A few hours of strenuous plodding indicated that the work could be done by night in time for the demonstration, but it was wondrous hard work. Men dropped out one by one. When lunch time came they found their food had frozen. The work went slower and slower as the strength of the men ebbed under the terrific strain.

When 3:15 in the afternoon came around H. W. Casler, division advertising manager of the New York Telephone Company, began to get worried, and decided to push his connections as far west as he could. He got C. H. Fuller, division superintendent of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, at his home in Hackensack, N. J., and rigged up between Hackensack and Paterson and Denver a three cornered line, over which both Casler and Fuller talked to W. F. Cozad, superintendent of the Mountain States Company in Denver. They explained their troubles and asked for connections with prominent men in Salt Lake City and Denver in case the wire to the coast was not restored in time.

And in the meantime the fight against time and the elements went on out in the storm filled Sierra just as zealously as if there was no question of not getting the line through in time. They did get it repaired in spite of the worst weather conditions ever faced in a little more than twelve hours and got connections between Paterson and San Francisco. But then came the crowning disappointment. They had done their work, but the temporary line was too rusty and would not carry well.

Two men on one section of this work were nine hours in making a trip of two miles and return, and one party spent an hour travelling one-quarter of a mile. Pictures that you who have listened wonderingly to the chatter from the Pacific.

There are other ventures of the trouble men which have been just as spectacular. One day before the opening of the San Francisco Exposition a burning building set fire to a pole and caused a break in the line. The repair man had firemen play a stream on him, climbed the pole through the fire and fixed the break. In August, 1915, a grass fire covering thousands of acres destroyed a mile of line, but the repair men fought the fire till they had it under control and then strung up the wires again.

Perhaps the crowning bit of daring for the sake of novelty occurred at the Seal Cliff in San Francisco, where transmitters had been placed in the surf to carry the boom of the Pacific to New York. The apparatus was washed away. A man was lowered on a rope to fix it, was caught in the waves dashed against the cliffs and nearly killed. They didn't hear the Pacific in New York, but the telephone men shifted quickly to Rockaway Beach and Californians heard the Atlantic.

EARLIEST KNOWN MAP OF NEW YORK NOW NATION'S PROPERTY

"HOLD up! Let no profane hand touch the pages of that treasure," were the words of P. Lee Phillips, head of the map division of the Library of Congress in Washington, to a visitor who ventured to lay a fingertip upon a leaf of the map of "Manatus," the first known sketch of Nieuw Amsterdam.

The bequest of Henry Harrisse, the biographer of Columbus, has placed in the possession of the division a series of maps suspected for a long time to be in existence, but not known actually to exist until 1892. In the series are three maps made in 1639 by Joan Vingboons of Amsterdam. One of them is the one known as the "Manatus." It was executed by Vingboons from his own drawings of the little town, then of forty-five landholders, but destined in less than three centuries to be the greatest city of the world.

Not much about Vingboons is definitely known, although he was a great traveller and published a large number of maps of the countries which he visited. It is said that he was born in Rotterdam; and that when a young man he accompanied Prince Jean Maurice of Nassau on a voyage to Brazil when the Prince sought to extend the Dutch possessions by colonizations in South America.

Vingboons subsequently visited the eastern coast of North America and made maps for the West India Company, which then held from the Dutch Government the monopoly, so far as that power could make good its grant, of the trade on the coast of America from New England to Florida and inland indefinitely. The series contains the "Manatus," a map of the North River and one of the Antilles, including California. The translation of the title to the first of these is as follows: "Manuscript map of the New Netherlands and Manhattan—Drawn by Joan Vingboons in 1639 for the West India Company of Holland. (Original maps.)"

These maps passed into the ownership of the publishing firm of Hulst & Van Keulen, and 200 years later were added to the library of Henry Harrisse, where they reposed unknown to the world, although cartographers surmised that they might be in existence somewhere.

Janvier in his book on "Old New York" says: "The earliest map of New York known to be in existence is that now in possession of Mr. Henry Harrisse, a plan of Manatus forty-four householders on this island drawn by Joan Vingboons in 1639; to which great additional value is given by its marginal legend recording the names of the first forty-five freeholders on this island. The most precious document was exhibited in July, 1892, in Paris at the Columbian exhibition of maps and globes."

Mr. Harrisse was born in Paris in 1830, but when very young came to this country, where his family lived in the South. He studied law, practised in Chicago and in New York, and forty-five years ago returned to Paris, where he lived up to the time of his death, about three years ago. He was one of the most learned bibliographers and the author of many pamphlets and books on historical subjects. On the occasion of the Columbus celebration in 1892 he was made a Knight of the Legion of Honor by the French Government. He allowed no reproductions of the Vingboons maps to be made during his lifetime, but by his will gave them to the Library of Congress.

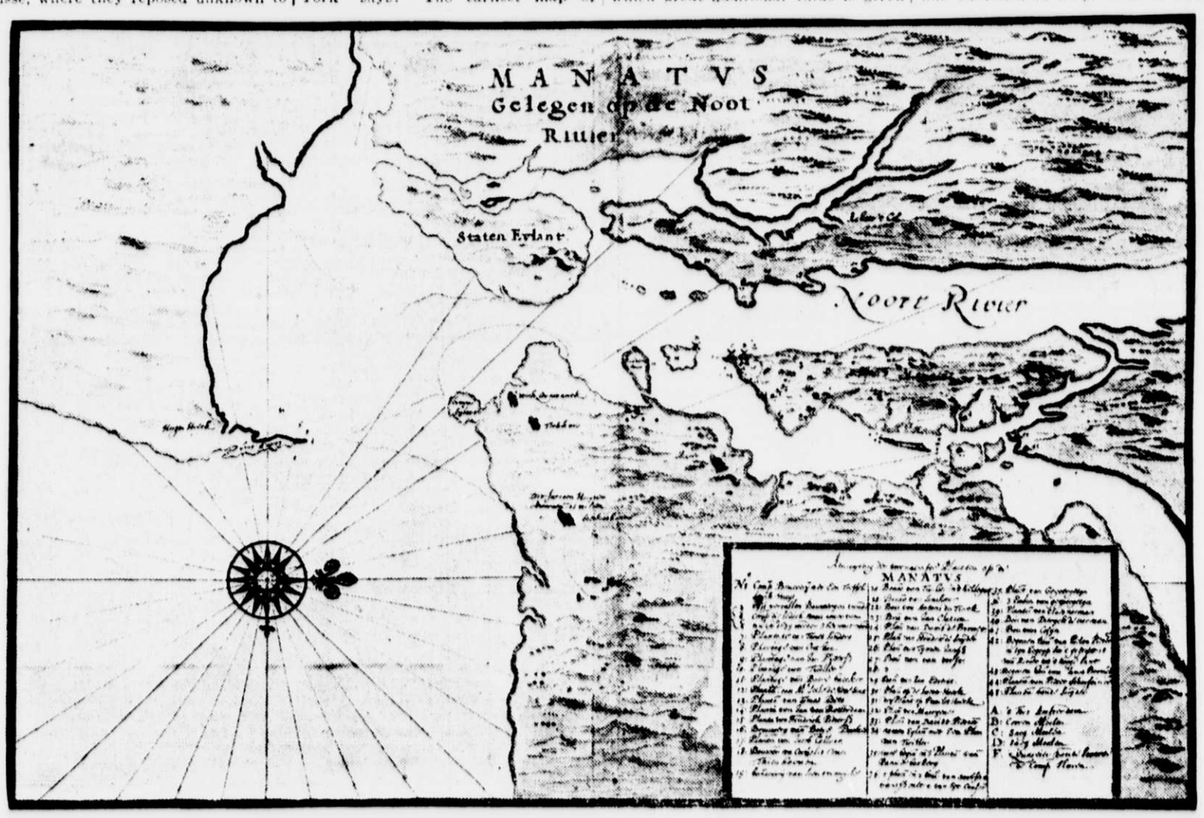
Within the past few months they have been delivered to the library. They are perfectly preserved, the colors laid by the hands of Joan Vingboons being firm and the lines clear and strong.

Is it singular that a fellow cartographer and an enthusiast like the head of the map division should delight in holding this trust, or that he should be horrified at the profanation of these documents by an irreverent touch? To him they are the links which lead back to the day of the beginning of things in this country.

The wanderings of these old charts are over, for they cannot, without a special act of Congress, be removed, and in all probability they will remain where they are as long as the nation exists.

A map of "t' Fort nieuw Amsterdam op de Manhatans" by Joost Hartgers, 1651, was formerly considered the first view of New York city; but this distinction must now be yielded to the Vingboons map.

A map by Adriaan vander Donck, 1655, was generally considered the second map; and there are several variations of it. Next comes the Visscher map, 1659, with its inset showing a pirate hanging in chains from the gibbet near the windmill on the Battery.



COAL FOR THE CANAL.

AT the rate of 12,000 tons a trip two big colliers are now carrying coal to the Government coal plant at Cristobal, Canal Zone. The colliers are the Achilles and the Ulysses. They are 500 feet long and 60 feet beam, the largest coal carriers so far constructed here.

The colliers start from Norfolk with their cargoes. They are fast twin screw vessels and make the passage to Cristobal in about five days. Each is expected to make twenty trips a year and accordingly they will carry 240,000 tons each to the Government coaling stations.

The Achilles and Ulysses were built by the Maryland Steel Company at Sparrows Point, Md., at a cost of about $1,000,000 each. They are commanded by former captains of Panama liners.

There are two Government coal plants at Panama, one at Cristobal and the other at Balboa. The larger, at Cristobal, is capable of holding 750,000 tons, not including a reserve store of 150,000 tons for the use of the navy. Government agents say that they will always be able to sell fuel to merchant ships at a cheaper rate than private concerns.